ITTO-CITES Programme for Implementing CITES Listings of Tropical Tree Species

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Timber tracking technologies

Photo credits: J. Grogan

Swietenia macrophylla (mahogany) tree

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Swietenia macrophylla (mahogany) log

The ITTO-CITES programme has supported the work of countries to improve traceability of tropical timber products in international trade.

Electronic tracking systems have capabilities that make them an asset in tackling illegal logging and the trade in illegal timber. Timber tracking technologies are a key tool in ensuring that countries are trading in timber of sustainable and legal origin.

Tracking technologies are a tool to strengthen the quality of the CITES non-detriment findings required for exports of specimens of Appendix II listed species.

Adopting and implementing management plans and setting sustainable logging quotas is just a first step. An adequate chain of custody must be put in place to ensure the traceability of these products.

New policies such as the EU Timber Regulation and the Lacey Act of the United States are providing renewed impetus for companies to implement timber tracking systems on a large scale as a way to obtain regulatory compliance and access to those markets.

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Logging operation

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Timber marking

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Measurement of a timber shipment

Types of Tracking systems include:

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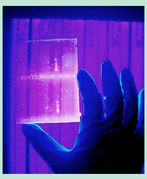
Physical tracking (RFID tags and bar coding)



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Chemical tracking (DNA and Isotope analysis)

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Plastic tags

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Paint marking

The Secretariats of CITES and of ITTO in 2012 launched a report entitled *Tracking sustainability: review of electronic and semi-electronic timber tracking technologies* as a practical guide to using these rapidly evolving technologies.

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